

Nazi regime did—has carried out such systematic genocide against its own population?

### The depopulation of Kampuchea

A senior Kampuchean government official gave me this answer. "The Chinese plan was to leave only one million Kampucheans alive, mostly women. Then they were going to bring in 15 million Chinese at first, and afterwards more, and eventually kill off all the rest of the Kampucheans." This idea, amounting to a Great Han project to create *Lebensraum* for China's hundreds of millions, first in Kampuchea and then if possible throughout Southeast Asia, is at first most incredible, even to myself, one of the most severe judges of the Peking regime; but upon further reflection makes the most sense out of what happened in Kampuchea.

After all, how is one to explain that the Pol Pot regime, under tight Chinese direction, was furiously building dikes, irrigation canals, dams, all the infrastructure for Chinese-style rice agriculture, on what is known to be the richest rice-growing land in Asia; and that at the same time was systematically killing off the population that would presumably have to work this land, maintain these structures, eat the rice grown? What was being done was clearly not for the benefit or use of the Kampucheans.

There was, of course, an elite stratum in Pol Pot's Hell, and they had plenty to eat; but as the process of mass murder accelerated, and Pol Pot and his close supporters saw their own Khmer Rouge ranks were revolting against them, they had to kill more and more just to stay in control.

In any crime, including such transcending crimes against humanity such as these, one must always ask: "Who benefits from the crime? Who has a motive for the crime?" In this case, the evidence is powerful enough to lodge a conviction, before any court of justice in any nation on the face of the earth, of the regime in Peking, including most especially its current leadership.

The thoughts that were last in my mind as I left Phnom Penh were directed back toward the United States, and the policies of this administration and the previous ones toward what happened here. I thought about Gen. Alexander Haig who, as deputy to Henry Kissinger, was intimately involved in the U.S. war policy in Kampuchea, directing a process which facts suggest led consciously and knowingly to the installation of a Peking puppet regime in Kampuchea, in the service of a joint strategy for establishing Chinese hegemony in Southeast Asia and in containing and destroying Vietnam in a war that did not end for Kissinger, Haig, and their controllers. Such people, because they are allowed to be more powerful, are more evil, more knowing in their evil, than those who murdered three million in Kampuchea.

## An interview with President Heng Samrin

*The following interview with President of Heng Samrin Kampuchea (Cambodia), was conducted by EIR Asia Editor Daniel Sneider during his recent visit to that country.*

*Heng Samrin is 47 years old. He has been president of Kampuchea since April 29, 1980 following national popular elections to the 117-seat National Assembly.*

*Though little is known about the Kampuchean leader, who makes some autobiographical remarks in this interview, prior to the December 1978 ouster of the Pol Pot regime, he had been a second-level leader of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) in the eastern region. In May 1978 he broke with the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary faction of the Khmer Rouge, and was one of the founders of the Kampuchea National United Front for National Salvation (KNUFNS), of which he became chairman.*

*After the ouster of the Pol Pot regime in December 1978 by the KNUFNS and Vietnamese forces, Heng Samrin became president of the People's Revolutionary Council.*

*President Heng Samrin rarely gives interviews to foreign journalists.*

**Sneider:** What is your response to the recently held United Nations conference on Kampuchea?

**Heng Samrin:** I would like to inform you about the problem of the international conference at the United Nations. As a matter of fact there is no Kampuchea problem to be solved. The question of Kampuchea has already been solved since our liberation day of Jan. 7 [1979], when we overthrew the genocidal regime [of Pol Pot]. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already made a statement on the international conference held in New York on the 13th [of July]. I would like to emphasize that the international conference there has no value to Kampuchea.

There is no problem to be solved. We have our People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea. We have a National Assembly. We have our State Council and a Council of Ministers. We have a constitution which is supported by all strata of the people.



**Sneider:** What is your view of the policies of ASEAN [Association of South-East Asian Nations] and of the Chinese?

**Heng Samrin:** To hit the nail on the head about the policies of ASEAN and the Chinese, we would like to state that we take the position of the recent conference of the three Indochinese foreign ministers of Kampuchea, Vietnam, and Laos. A regional conference between the Indochinese and the ASEAN countries, which we proposed, is the most important. Afterwards an international conference should be held in order to guarantee the agreement reached between the ASEAN and Indochinese countries.

We hope that the ASEAN countries will be tolerant on this question. Now we are talking about ASEAN and China. For ASEAN and China, we can state that they have the same policy position because they had the same point of view during the conference in New York on the question of withdrawal of the Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea, on the question of disarming the government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

But the only difference between the positions of ASEAN and China is their strategy. On the Chinese side, they support the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique. And the ASEAN side supports the traitors Son Sann and Sihanouk.

**Sneider:** What do you think of the policy of the Reagan administration toward this region?

**Heng Samrin:** The policy of the Reagan administration is to hold power in this region, which was formerly a strategic region of the United States. So the policies of Reagan still have the ambition to control Southeast Asia. It means they wish to maintain the region in which the ASEAN countries are—which have already been under their influence—to oppose the other Southeast Asian countries here.

Therefore the Reagan administration policy is in collusion with China, to encourage China to carry out its ambitions of aggression in Southeast Asia, especially in

Indochina. As a matter of fact, the visit of Secretary of State Haig to China had the point of stimulating China to give the “second lesson” to Vietnam.

Generally speaking, the policies of Reagan have the ambition to take power and control the Southeast Asian region, in particular the countries of ASEAN.

**Sneider:** How strong are the Pol Pot forces in Kampuchea at this time?

**Heng Samrin:** I can say that there is no Pol Pot force existing *in* Kampuchean territory, but I can say that most of them are living in the territory of Thailand and also along the border. They use subversive activities and conduct guerrilla war against us. This can be done because of the support of the Chinese expansionists, who use the support of the countries of ASEAN—that is, Thailand—to give them sanctuary and act against us.

I would like to inform you that the people of Kampuchea say that the situation in Kampuchea is irreversible.

**Sneider:** What do you think of this “united front” of Son Sann, Sihanouk, and the Pol Potists?

**Heng Samrin:** I can state that the “united front” which has appeared is a ploy of the U.S. imperialists, the Chinese expansionists, and the ASEAN countries. These three people, they are all eager to be the boss. To unite the front is not easy. The reason is that these people have no patriotism. Everyone of them only thinks about themselves, their self-benefit, and their group.

**Sneider:** Now I have a whole series of questions about the past which I think are also important regarding the present. Regarding the past, to your own knowledge, what was the direct Chinese role during the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea?

**Heng Samrin:** During the Pol Pot regime, the Chinese played a very important role to direct Pol Pot's and Khieu Samphan's people. The most important role was to use Pol Pot and his clique in order to take our land, our territory, and also to put the yoke of oppression on our people in order to gain the advantage for conducting aggression in Indochina, as well as in Southeast Asia.

Refer back to the previous story, that we had united together [with the Chinese—D.S.] to fight against colonialism and imperialism. At the time we won the war, in April 1975, the Khmer Rouge were under the direction of the Chinese authorities, and they turned the situation around in Kampuchea and considered the Vietnamese as their first enemy. They started to conduct aggressive operations against them.

I can say that the Chinese have the ambition to control this region in order to have become the Great Empire in this area and to conduct aggression in Southeast Asia.



*A mass grave in Kampuchea.*

**Sneider:** But do you think the Chinese were responsible, directly responsible, for what happened under Pol Pot to Kampuchea?

**Heng Samrin:** It is true that the Chinese must be responsible for what happened under Pol Pot's hand, because many millions of people were massacred under their directive by the henchmen of Pol Pot and their clique.

**Sneider:** Regarding the exact relationship between Pol Pot and the Chinese. Now, some people have told me that Pol Pot followed the Chinese ideology and carried out the ideas of the Chinese. Other people say that the real master of Kampuchea was not Pol Pot but the Chinese ambassador here. So there are two different understandings of the relationship. What is yours?

**Heng Samrin:** The ideology of Pol Pot and Khieu Samphan is the ideology of Maoism, because they wished to conduct the "revolution" of Kampuchea similar to the Chinese revolution of Maoism. The ideology of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary was influenced by the ideology of Peking under the direction of Mao.

**Sneider:** Are you saying that Pol Pot and Ieng Sary did what they did because they believed in Maoism or because the Chinese told them to do it?

**Heng Samrin:** They did both together. They were influenced by the ideology of the Chinese and they were under the directive of those Chinese. I can say this because of all of the military equipment and supplies came from China, even the equipment to fight against the U.S. imperialists [i.e. before 1975] was completely supported by them.

**Sneider:** What I can see from talking to people here, it is very clear that in April 1975, at least for Pol Pot and Ieng Sary—maybe not for everyone—they had a plan, an idea of what they were going to do. For example, to take all the people in the cities and send them out. Was there a master-plan for what happened, including the mass murders? And whose plan was it? Pol Pot's? The Chinese?

And when was this plan made?

**Heng Samrin:** Before the days of April [1975], even the people who were in the army, the cadre, didn't know this plan. At the time of April 17, the idea to evacuate the citizens out of the cities was mainly a directive under the control of China and carried out by Pol Pot and Ieng Sary and some of their leaders in the subcommittee. People didn't know what to do.

**Sneider:** You say it was mainly the idea of China. How do you know that?

**Heng Samrin:** As soon as the liberation day came [April 17, 1975] there were Chinese advisers present in Phnom Penh.

**Sneider:** Were you in Phnom Penh at that time?

**Heng Samrin:** On April 17, I was myself in Phnom Penh city.

**Sneider:** I've heard the idea that the Chinese wanted to reduce the population of Kampuchea, and that they planned to bring Chinese here. Do you think that that is true?

**Heng Samrin:** It's true. So far as I know, Pol Pot and Ieng Sary had the plan to increase the population. It was stated in the 10-year plan to have 20 million people in Kampuchea. At the same time they put out the plan, they started killing the youth, the people of Kampuchea. Therefore they planned to receive Chinese people for their replacement.

They planned to kill all the Kampuchean people and keep only 10,000 people alive. The question is, who lives inside the country? The Chinese people would come to replace them.

**Sneider:** Someone who plans to kill the entire population of their country, like Pol Pot and Ieng Sary, can you really say they were Kampuchean?

**Heng Samrin:** We can say that these two men are not of pure Khmer nationality. They are Sino-Kampuchean. If we look, for example, at the background of Ieng Sary, at his parents, they were living in the [Mekong] delta of southern Vietnam. According to his biography, Ieng Sary, referring to his parents, was half Chinese-Vietnamese and Kampuchean.

**Sneider:** What happened to the Chinese who were serving as advisers here? How many Chinese were here? Were any of them captured when liberation came? Did you capture Chinese documents?

**Heng Samrin:** The Chinese advisers living in Kampuchea during that time were mainly occupied in the military field. We can state that the amount of those Chinese advisers was 20,000. During the operation to liberate the country [from Pol Pot—D.S.], those Chinese advisers were gathered together and escaped through the forests,

through the jungle, to Thai territory. And we also captured some documents like the passport of Ieng Sary, his Chinese passport in the name of Su Hao.

**Sneider:** Are you saying 20,000 Chinese advisers escaped through Thailand?

**Heng Samrin:** They fled through Thailand, all of them, with Pol Pot and Ieng Sary soldiers. Apart from the advisers in Kampong Som, in the navy base there, those people went by ship, and a certain number of them went out with the soldiers and served as advisers, living in the mountainous areas before they later went into Thai territory.

**Sneider:** What can you tell me about your personal experience during the Pol Pot period? What was the point at which *you* realized what was going on inside Kampuchea?

**Heng Samrin:** According to my experience, the living conditions under the Pol Pot regime were bitter. Before they seized power, they started the purge system to kill the cadre, especially the cadre who were historically part of the struggle against colonialism [the pre-1954 anti-French period—D.S.], and also up to 1974 they started to kill the cadre, the real patriots, who served with them. I had realized the betrayal of Pol Pot since 1972-73, and the most critical time [of the purges] was in 1974.

After 1975, they still kept killing the cadre, down to the people, especially the government workers of Lon Nol, and the “new citizens” who were evacuated out of the city.

**Sneider:** You mean these things happened before 1975? That in the “liberated areas” that they controlled, they carried out these policies that they later carried out in the whole country?

**Heng Samrin:** That’s right. First of all in the liberated zone, and then for the entire country. The implementation of that regime was realized by the people in every zone of Kampuchea, but when they rose against them, they were destroyed by them. The rebellions usually failed, so the other struggling people tried to live quietly and wait for a special occasion. So up to the year 1978, that was the time they had the opportunity to join with the army, with the people [in the east—D.S.], and fled to Vietnamese territory where they assisted them so they could fight back.

**Sneider:** From what I can figure out, there were two periods during the four years, the first one from 1975 to the end of 1976, when they were killing the “new people” and so on. Then in the last two years of the Pol Pot regime, much of the killing was going on within the Khmer Rouge itself. I was told that the southwest region, which was under the direct control of Pol Pot’s lieutenants, that this region was used as a base against the entire

country, including the eastern region, where I know you were. Is that an accurate understanding?

**Heng Samrin:** All that you say is correct. But the Pol Pot purges were in three phases. The first one began in the year 1973, and at that time they killed all the cadre who were the old, experienced ones who used to fight against the colonialists [the French—D.S.], and they were accused of being “KGB” spies and also were accused of having the ideology or the tendency of Vietnam. That was the first phase.

The second phase is after April 1975 until 1976. That was the purge system when they killed all strata of the people and particularly government workers of Lon Nol. Within that time, as I mentioned, they also massacred cadre who joined the revolution after 1970.

In the third phase, they gathered all regional forces from everywhere in order to fight in the eastern region. They killed all military people; all people, the civilian authorities, who served in the eastern region during that time were killed completely. During the third phase they used all means available like infantry, armor, airplanes.

**Sneider:** It was like a war within Kampuchea?

**Heng Samrin:** That was the time when they declared a state of emergency in the entire country, that was May 25, 1978. In the meantime, they also carried out aggression against Vietnam and accused Vietnam of trying to invade us.

**Sneider:** How do you answer the question: why did this incredible thing happen here?

**Heng Samrin:** As you know, it is an incredible thing that Pol Pot and Ieng Sary did here. They even tried to abolish the culture of the nation of Kampuchea. They closed the door. No foreign country was allowed to see what was happening during that time, except China. Especially they massacred their own nation, which is unbelievable. Nobody living abroad, except China, had any possibility to see what was happening here.

It was an unstable situation in Kampuchea in 1978. That was the time they allowed the English journalist [Malcolm Caldwell] to come to visit, that was the time the journalist was killed in the hotel in Phnom Penh. The reason the journalist was killed was that he knew the situation in Kampuchea, what Pol Pot did; that’s why they killed him, to eliminate the proof.

**Sneider:** Thank you very much. I have taken a lot of your time and I hope your words will be read by people in Washington so they can think about what they do here.

**Heng Samrin:** I would like to thank you for your visit and for paying much attention to the situation in Kampuchea. And I would like to wish for good relations between the people of Kampuchea and the people of America.